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# FOREIGN DEPARTMENT

IN CHARGE OF

LAVINIA L. DOCK, R.N.

## THE ROYAL COMMISSION ON VENEREAL DISEASES

At least the long, profound silence on this subject, so long maintained by public men in Great Britain has been broken, and a Royal Commission appointed by Parliament has made fully known the great gravity of these two prevalent diseases as a national problem.

In the course of their inquiry they called nurses and midwives and asked them how much they had been taught on this subject. Amy Hughes and Alice Gregory both made it very clear that hospital education had drawn a veil over it and had largely left nurses to find out for themselves what they could.

Americans who attended the International Council of Nurses in London in 1909 may remember the bold forward step taken by English nurses in their bringing forward in a public meeting a subject at that time generally tabooed. We remember being told then of an English medical woman who had wished to bring a paper on the social aspect of venereal diseases before the Medical Society (of men and a few women) to which she belonged, and who was forbidden (by the Chairman, or the Programme Committee) to introduce the shocking subject. It was a little book called *Under the Surface*, written by an English medical woman, which brought to the popular attention, in a clear, simple style, the shocking facts underlying the taboo. So the world moves.

## OUR FRIENDS THE LAY NURSES

Thanks to the active, prompt work of organized nurses in Great Britain, the question of registration on a sound basis is to be threshed out at a coördinated meeting where all those of many views will meet. Let us hope it will be settled honorably. It would be too black a piece of ingratitude if the English public at this moment should deal the trained, professional, organized nurses of their country a stab in the back.

## A TILT IN THE COURTS

Mrs. Fenwick, the fearless one with her lance, the *British Journal of Nursing*, is opening a legal action with Messrs. Macmillan and their editor of the *Nursing Times*, whose names we almost fear to speak lest they look this way. We wish we could be in court when the case opens.

## A BEQUEST TO DR. HAMILTON

Dr. Anna Hamilton has had a noble gift of a beautiful and extensive domain bequeathed to her by an unmarried French lady, for a convalescent hospital and country home. It was deeded to her before the war, but because of various delays the government has just notified her that she may take possession of it. She is naturally as happy as can be over the prospect of creating her ideal hospital in this lovely place, but must raise the money to build and run it. How hard it is to get money for growth and help! How easy to find it for death and destruction! Americans who are able to help France could not do a more genuine and lasting service than to help Dr. Hamilton find this money.

## AS TO PREPAREDNESS

Dear fellow-nurses, whatever you do after these various wars are over, do not, I earnestly beg of you, do not unite in "Veterans of" this, that and the other part of any fray! Oh, how truly it is to be desired that the "international idea" will again arise, that the spirit of international amity and comity will be able to counteract the tendency to petty sectionalism and narrow intolerant patriotism now rampant. Is there anything more lamentable than to see women, and nurses especially, imitating the vain rivalries of men, echoing their absurd war cries, showing the clan spirit and perpetuating the memory of feud and clash? I hope we shall not have "Mexican War Nurses" or "European War Nurses" or any kind that applaud and foster the war spirit—blight of nations. Surely women should now give men a new lead, not follow them in their old barbarous customs. A new lead, a new note, an independent stand, with a clearer, farther vision than fighting man has held.

## A NURSE ON THE ANTI-PREPAREDNESS COMMITTEE

Miss Wald will go to introduce the speakers on the national tour of this committee, whose announcement states in the form of a resolution its conviction that:

The various militarist organizations masquerading as "defense" societies and falsely claiming that they alone can speak for American patriotism are deliberately creating a widespread condition of hysteria as to the safety of this country and the danger of foreign invasion, and this reckless propaganda of militarism and jingo-imperialism if allowed to go on unchecked will inevitably lead to the destruction of the principles of liberty and freedom upon which the hope of American democracy is based.

This tour of the large cities will have been made by the time this is printed.